

re CG Docket No. 02-278I read in the local paper that the FCC is revisiting telemarketing rules, and needs citizen input. I apologize in advance for the intensity of my comments that follow, but they accurately reflect the anger I feel about this industry.

I must begin by taking issue with a comment attributed to K. Dane Snowden, Chief of the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau at the FCC, that "Telmarketing is a legitimate means of reaching consumers. However, there are instances where abuses in telemarketing practice adversely impact the consumer." In my experience, there is no legitimate place for telemarketing. I have never bought anything from a telemarketer and never will -- if I want to buy something I know how to find it and buy it. And abuses are rampant, not just instances.

Some specific complaints and RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Automatic dialers are common, even though I thought they were illegal. Often I answer a call but no one is there, just a click and silence. Other times, an obnoxious voice pretending to be my friend leaves a message, but does not identify itself. It just says to record my name and phone number and someone will call me back. Autodialers should be taken off the market and the fine for using one be more than the price of purchasing it in the first place! (Did you ever get interrupted by one of these calls when you are expecting a friend or business to return a call and are working on a ladder, writing a difficult-to-construct sentence, taking a nap, or in the bathroom?)

2. Most telemarketers have blocked their names and phone numbers from showing up on caller ID. They hide behind secrecy, I guess because they have something to hide. I tell them to remove my number from their list whenever there is a person to talk to, but that is rare. I have listed my number with the Direct Marketers Preference Service, but the calls still come. I suggest that all telemarketers be required to unblock their numbers, so abusers can be identified.

3. I suggest, also, that the call tracing feature available from most local phone companies be made more practical, so telemarketers who block their numbers can still be identified. As it now stands, one must go through the local police to get the results of a trace, but an annoying telemarketing call does not warrant distracting the police from more important business. Rather, the results of the trace should be available directly to the customer -- at no charge -- so a complaint could be filed against frequent or blatant abusers.

I know that the FCC is trying to be fair to both sides of the issue, but in this case, I don't believe that telemarketers have any rights, only an obligation to follow the rules, and to respect the time and privacy of citizens. Their use of autodialers and secrecy suggest that they do

not respect time and privacy and that they believe they can get away with anything. If any telemarketer believes he has the right to annoy me secretly and repeatedly with unwanted sales pitches, would you please send me his HOME phone number, so I and my firends can call him at inconvient times to discuss the issue?

I hope that the FCC will act as an advocate for the citizens on this issue, because as it now stands, we are powerless to act against secret telemarketers.

Robert Freund